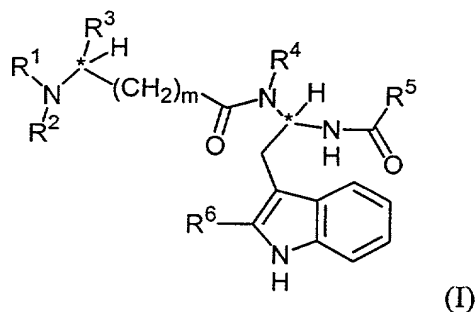


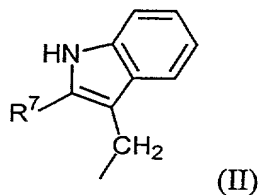
THE CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

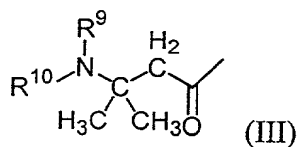
1. Compounds of the formula I

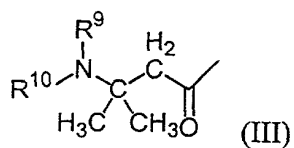


- 15 wherein * means a carbon atom which, when a chiral carbon atom, has a R or S configuration, one of R¹ and R³ is an hydrogen atom and the other is a group of formula II

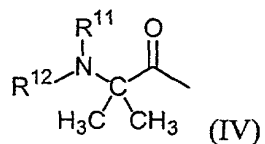


- 25 R² is a hydrogen atom, a linear or branched C₁-C₆ alkyl group, an aryl group, a heterocyclic group, a cycloalkyl group, a (CH₂)_n-aryl group, a (CH₂)_n-heterocyclic group, a (CH₂)_n-cycloalkyl group, a methylsulfonyl group, a phenylsulfonyl group, a C(O)R⁸ group or a group according to one of formulas III to VIII:

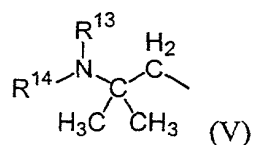




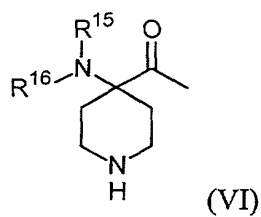
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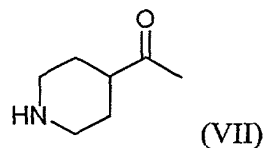
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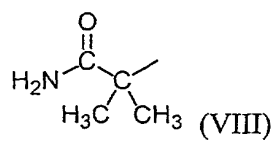
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R^4 is a hydrogen atom or a linear or branched C_1 - C_4 -alkyl group, R^5 is a hydrogen atom, a
35 linear or branched C_1 - C_4 alkyl group, a $(\text{CH}_2)_n$ -aryl group, a $(\text{CH}_2)_n$ -heterocyclic group, a

(CH₂)_n-cycloalkyl group or an amino group, R₆ and R₇ are independently from each other a hydrogen atom or a linear or branched C₁-C₄-alkyl group, R₈ is a linear or branched C₁-C₆-alkyl group, R₉, R₁₀, R₁₁, R₁₂, R₁₃, R₁₄, R₁₅, and R₁₆ are independently from each other a hydrogen atom or a linear or branched C₁-C₄-alkyl group, m is 0, 1 or 2 and n is 1 or 2.

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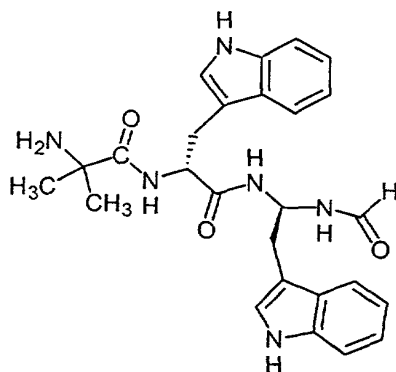
2. Compounds according to claim 1, wherein R² is hydrogen, R³ is a group of formula II and m is 0.

3. Compounds according to claim 2, wherein the linear or branched C₁-C₄ alkyl group is methyl, the linear or branched C₁-C₆ alkyl group is methyl, ethyl or i-butyl, aryl is phenyl or naphthyl, cycloalkyl is cyclohexyl and the heterocyclic group is a 4-piperidinyl or 3-pyrrolyl group.

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4. A compound which is

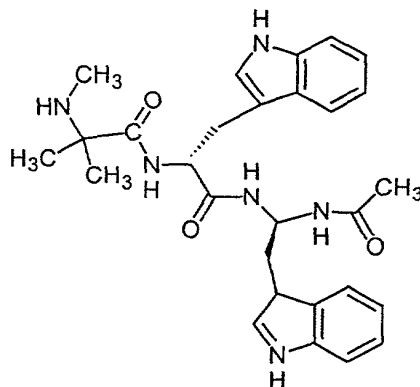
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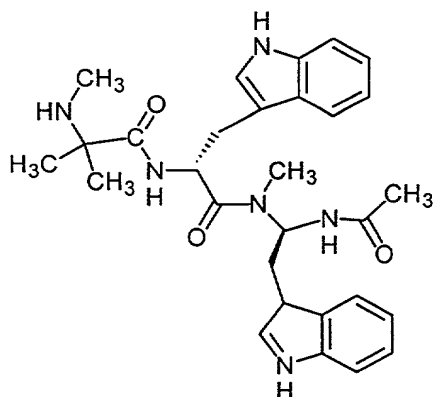
5. A compound which is

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6. A compound which is



7. A pharmaceutical composition, comprising a compound of claim 1.

8. The composition of claim of claim 7, in combination with a
15 pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

9. The composition of claim of claim 7, in combination with an additional
growth hormone secretagogue.

10. A method for elevating the plasma level of growth hormone in a mammal
20 comprising administering to a mammal a therapeutically effective amount of a compound
according to claim 1.

11. A method for the treatment of growth hormone secretion deficiency
25 comprising administering to a mammal a therapeutically effective amount of a compound
according to claim 1.

12. A method for the treatment of growth retardation in child comprising
administering to a patient a therapeutically effective amount of a compound according to
30 claim 1.

13. A method for the treatment of metabolic disorders associated with growth
hormone secretion deficiency, in particular in aged subjects, comprising administering to a
patient a therapeutically effective amount of a compound according to claim 1.

14. A method for promoting wound healing, recovery from surgery or recovery from debilitating illnesses, which comprises administering a therapeutically effective amount of a compound according to claim 1.

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